

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 23, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. PUGH made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 199.]

*The Committee on Public Lands, to whom was referred the petition of Henry Hobbs, of the State of Maine, for an extension of the act "to provide for satisfying claims for bounty lands for military services in the late war with Great Britain, and for other purposes," approved July 27, 1842, has examined the subject, and ask leave now to report:*

The act of July 27, 1842, by its first section, authorized the location of all bounty-land warrants for military service in the war of 1812 with Great Britain, which remained unsatisfied at that date, within the period of five years thereafter. The second section extended for a like period the authority to issue and to locate bounty-land warrants, under two acts approved January 27, 1835, (Statutes at Large, vol. 4, page 749,) one with regard to officers and soldiers in the war of 1812, and one with regard to officers and soldiers in the revolutionary war. The act of 1842 declared, nevertheless, "that all cases which shall not, within the time aforesaid, be finally disposed of, shall be thereafter forever barred from the benefits of all claim to bounty land for services performed within the spirit and meaning of said acts." (Statutes at Large, vol. 5, page 497.)

The two acts of January 27, 1835, ceased to be effectual, by limitation, on the 26th of May, 1839, and the 1st of January, 1840, respectively, and were themselves acts to revive and continue in force, for the third or fourth time, certain acts which had then expired.

The act of 1842 expired on the 27th of July, 1847, by limitation; but was revived by the act of June 26, 1848, and continued in force during a term of five years from the date last named. (Statutes at Large, vol. 9, page 240.)

This act of 1848 expired on the 26th of June, 1853, but was revived for a term of five years from that date, by the act of February 8, 1854. (Statutes at Large, vol. 10, page 267.)

The Commissioner of the General Land Office recommends that the act of 1842 be revived and continued in force indefinitely; but the reasons assigned for this recommendation are not of a satisfactory character. The claims for bounty lands under that act are now very

ancient; they have been lost, by mere neglect, five or six times, and and after full and repeated notice as to the consequences of such neglect. It may be convenient to the General Land Office, and in some few cases, perhaps, would be equitable to enlarge the period for locating warrants heretofore issued; and the committee is willing to continue the act of 1842 in force, to that extent, for three years. But the fact that such warrants may be claimed by the heirs-at-law (ever so remote in degree) of deceased officers and soldiers—and not merely, as under the general acts of March 3, 1855, and May 14, 1856, by the officers and soldiers themselves, or their widows or minor children—affords a sufficient reason why claims, which are destitute of merit, as to most of those who would now assert them, should not be relieved from the usual consequences of so great a lapse of time.

The committee reports a bill in accordance with these suggestions.